



GRANITE FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
109 E. Union Street, Granite Falls, WA 98252
(360) 691-2603 <http://www.gfhistory.org>

To our friends and members
throughout the community, state, and across all borders:
"Thank you for your support!"



September 31, 2021

Our mission: to collect, preserve and share the history of the Granite Falls region to foster better understanding and appreciation of the values that built our city and contributed to our County's rural heritage.

Our purpose: to locate and identify appropriate material, to protect and interpret that material, and finally to make it available to the greatest possible extent.

Note: Railroad/Reunion Days 2021 (10/1-3) is cancelled

1. Museum expansion progress
2. Other expansion work
3. Museum expansion expenses
4. Researching and sharing info
5. Visitors
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7. Volunteer opportunities
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10. Final thoughts for August
11. "Fall", by Joe Beckett, GFHS Class of '77

1. **Museum expansion progress** - September was a good month for the museum's addition. There was much work that was accomplished, with only a few things left on the "To Do" list. We are looking forward to moving our work and storage

completion. The drywall looks great, the exterior is painted and stained, and the gas line is ready to be reconnected. All that is left to do is install the gutters and downspouts, finish the installation of the rest of the electrical switches/outlets and light covers, stain (or paint) the interior concrete, and pour the



concrete sidewalk. During this extra busy construction time, ADT security always alerted us whenever anyone tripped the sensors, setting off the ear-splitting alarms. Hopefully we are all on the same page now and won't need to be alerted to anymore false alarms. **Update: electrical trim is finished!**

2. **Other expansion work** - Other work was needed to prepare for what the contractors were doing or planning. We first thought that the exterior and interior painting would be done by volunteers, which included the staining of the concrete floor to match the stained floor of the main building. So, all the old, stored paint was pulled from beneath the stairs to see if we had anything that might be useful. Needless to say, there was nothing that matched the green wall color used in the back portion of the museum. However, there was some exterior paint that was a good match to paint behind the sink before the plumber shows up. The rest of the 14-year-old paint from under the stairs was not useable, so it was hauled to the County's [hazardous waste site](#) in **Everett**, and the old latex

Insulation ✓	To Do:
Drywall hung & finished✓	Connect gas meter!
Trim installed ✓	Install sink
Exterior painted ✓	Paint/stain floor
Interior painted ✓	Install gutters/downspouts
Electrical trim ✓	Pour concrete sidewalk
Gas meter relocated ✓	Move in! WOOHOO!

into one location. Insulation was completed by end of August, but had to make a few minor corrections in September. The month starting with drywall installation and finishing. Trim was then installed. Outside, the new exterior walls were prepped and painted the third week, followed by the interior. [Puget Sound Energy \(PSE\)](#) relocated the gas meter, but still has not yet connected it. On September 13, our contractor **Travis Van Overbeke** sent a note to **PSE**, chastising them for not yet having heat available in our building. We have been without heat during the drywall and painting work, which has been a huge detriment to the completion of this project. Hopefully **PSE** will be able to find the time to get us connected right away. We had to use portable electric heaters for the drywall and painting, but it was extra unneeded effort to set up and work around. Despite the **PSE** issue, the project is nearing



paint was delivered to a free latex drop-off place. Two updates were sent to museum volunteers to solicit help for cleaning, masking, painting, and cleanup for the painting chores, but volunteer help was not needed. We are fortunate that **Travis Van Overbeke** made arrangements and completed the work much quicker (and better) than we could. On September 16, **Tom Thorleifson** provided some photographs of early work on the museum extension so the inspector could verify some items that are already buried. And, finally the mystery of the cut cable line was solved! **Siders - With Snips - In the Attic!** **Comcast** fixed it quickly, no questions asked. The cable was well-anchored on the fascia outside, so the siding installers went into the attic, cut the cable about 4 ft from the wall, pulled it outside, put up the last part of the siding, drilled a new hole, and then shoved the cable back in. There was no change in outside slack or stress relief, just that the cut cable inside had to be connected. Siding is finished, cable is secure!

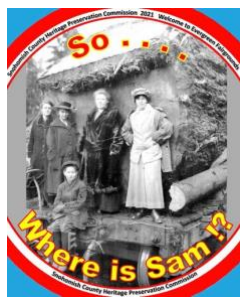
3. Museum expansion expenses - We received the 3rd invoice from **Van Overbeke Construction** on September 10, which we immediately paid. Initially we used cash on hand to get started in January 2020. We were provided grant money from the **M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust** for the major construction start, then we received some generous donations from museum members and friends. We are using our endowment fund "cushion" to cover the final costs until the second **Murdock** portion arrives. Any excess will be used to replace money from the endowment fund. Paperwork has already been approved by the **Community Foundation of Snohomish County (CF-SC)** for the transfer so that all costs are timely covered through the completion of construction.

4. Researching and sharing info - Fulfilling our mission and purpose during the month of September:

A. Pipe Thawer - After the August newsletter went to press, we received a thank you on August 31 from the Chicago-based **D.S. Darley Company**, (manufacturers of our very old pipe thawer - see the August 2021 newsletter) for the enjoyment we provided by sending them pictures. They made the item 100+ years ago, but nobody there is old enough to have seen one or even know that one still existed.



B. Centennial Sam - "What Happened to Centennial Sam?"

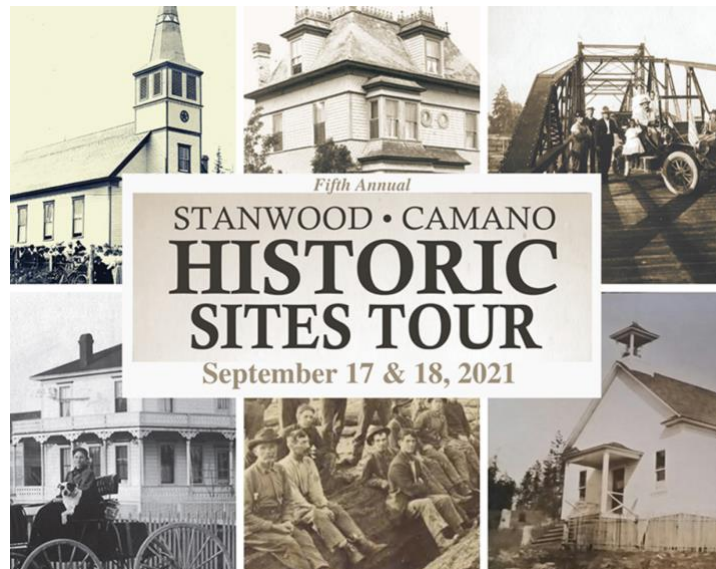


The "History's Mysteries" cybertour at **Evergreen Fairgrounds** went "live" on August 31 for the duration of the Fair. This was a seven-stop question/answer game, for which the grand prize was an **Xbox Series X**! About 410 people participated, following the life story of the mythical **Centennial Sam** (who had a remarkable resemblance to an old **Granite Falls** area resident).

C. Railroad Days Alumni Dinner cancelled - On September 2, our August newsletter went out announcing (among other things) the cancellation of the Railroad Days Dinner. Folks were disappointed, but we received a number of very understanding comments. We anticipate having the Alumni

Dinner in 2022 for the **Granite Falls Alumni Foundation** to restart this tradition. The classes of 1970 and 1971 have missed their 50th reunion, which we will celebrate next year for them along with the class of 1972.

D. Stanwood-Camano Island Historical Sites Tour - Also on September 2, a notice went out to all LOSCHO members that the **Stanwood Area Historical Society** held their fifth annual Historic Sites Tour for Stanwood/Camano Island on Friday, September 17, noon to 4 p.m. and Saturday September 18, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information people can visit the



website for the event at historicsitestour.com and can plan to attend next year in 2022.

E. Street right-of-way - On September 3, we provided some early **Granite Falls** maps to the **City of Granite Falls**, to help with a public records request regarding street right-of-way.

F. Index Historical Museum - **Tom Thorleifson** helped **Index Historical Museum** put their **iMac** back into operation after months of minimal use during the COVID restrictions. Mouse and keyboard batteries had died, and the system login password was forgotten. A little empathy is in order - - this has happened to most of us, especially if a person uses more than one computer and uses those computers often. And not only that, but the location of the secure hiding place for the handwritten password was also forgotten! They are now back in service with everything working.

G. Granite Falls "History Mystery" - On September 7, a great question was asked by a new resident for which we had to dig for an answer. The question: "How did the streets on the east of town get the names **Indiana**, **Kentucky**, and **Wabash**?" The answer: "*Granite Falls was platted in 1890 into 18 blocks, 12 on the homestead of **Wright**, and 6 on the homestead of **Davis**. The 1910 maps of downtown Granite Falls show those blocks (all west of Granite Ave) in a single yellow color, designated 'Granite Falls Original Townsite'. About four years later, **William M. Turner** got tired of farming and retired, designating some of his property as platted blocks in town (all east of Granite Ave). While no one recorded exactly why, the streets that came with the platting within **Turner's** homestead seem to have been named for personal reasons. **William Turner** was born in **INDIANA**. His wife **Martha** was born in **KENTUCKY**. His mother's family (the **Manwaring** family) at some point settled in **WABASH, Indiana**.*"

H. Granite Falls street banners - On September 8, **Fred Cruger** worked with the **City** to submit a grant for street pole banners to replace the rather worn set they now have. To be successful, the banners will need to promote the tourism branding being advanced by [Snohomish County](#) and meet certain color, font, and logo requirements. They will be used to highlight both the [City of Granite Falls](#) and the overall **Mountain Loop**. A few samples were designed and ordered, which were installed in town the last week of September.



When you are in town again, look for the “Hiking” ones near the main intersection.

I. Edmonds Museum gifts GF Yearbook - On September 9, **Tom Thorleifson** responded to [Edmonds Historical Museum](#) that we would be happy to accept a missing yearbooks

1948 Granite Falls High School	1920	1929	1937
yearbook from their collection. We	1921	1931	1938
have a good set of yearbooks that	1922	1932	2016
have been digitized, but we are	1925	1933	2017
missing some of the issues. This	1926	1934	2018
1948 gifted yearbook is one of a	1927	1935	2019
few during the 40s and early 50s	1928	1936	2020
with student pictures carefully cut			
from the pages. This happened			
during the era when photographs were just becoming more			
available, but not everyone could afford a camera or the film			
developing. So, a nice yearbook picture was often “fair game”			
to be removed for a special, framed picture within a home.			

J. Granite Falls Bridge replacement - On September 10, we received some insight into a financial planning document that seemed to hold hope for a replacement bridge for the **Falls** bridge (Bridge #102) in 2024. That’s a \$19M project that might be adjusted to keep the existing bridge in place as a special pedestrian/bicycle overlook. We are concerned for a parking area for hikers heading down to the falls and fishway. Since the new bridge will be on the downstream side of the existing bridge, a trail and a service road are needed to go from the

parking area underneath the new and old bridges rather than playing Frogger with the gravel and log trucks. The old (current) bridge would offer a great (and safe) view of the



Current Bridge 102 on the left, c1934
The 1911 bridge is on the right.

Falls. Our organization will need to actively promote such an idea if we want it to happen. Stay tuned!

K. PUD inquiry about maps - On September 15, we received an unofficial request from [Snohomish County PUD](#), asking if our historical map layers might be available for some work they need to complete in adding historical information to their maps for environmental reasons. An affirmative response was sent by **Fred Cruger**, but nothing more has been heard.

L. Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting - **Tom Thorleifson** and **Fred Cruger** attended the September 21 meeting of the [Snohomish County Historic Preservation Commission](#). The primary item on the agenda was a review of the **Centennial Sam** “History’s Mystery” Tour at the Fair (which went Fairly well . . . pun intended). The group also reviewed some great videos created by the [Tulalip Tribes](#) as fulfillment to an earlier grant – they cover the history of the Point Elliott Treaty. You can view these videos by selecting these links sent from [Hibulb Cultural Center](#) to **Gretchen Kaehler**, the **Snohomish County Archaeologist**:

[Point Elliott Treaty - Part 1: History](#)
[Point Elliott Treaty - Part 2: Boldt Decision](#)

M. 1916 Engineering report request - On September 24, we received a request for the [1916 County Engineering](#) report that is digitized in our files. It was delivered immediately.

N. Sprinters loop the Loop! - On September 25, the Pacific Northwest Sprinters Fall Mountain Loop Tour took place. A



group of about 25 Sprinter vans gathered in the [Granite Falls IGA](#) parking lot then “looped **The Loop**”. The organizer arranged in advance for **Fred** to set up a display and offer a short tutorial on **The Loop** before they set out. After talking with **Fred Cruger**, he was REALLY excited to hear about the **Mountain Loop Tour**, and sent out a note to the registered folks to download the [Mountain Loop Tour app](#) before they

came. A table with the museum's special historical tablecloth was set up, brochures and other information were available, and **Fred** explained important items with them. In attendance in those 25 vans were about 50 people and maybe 15-20 dogs. It was hard to tell how many dogs because they ranged in size from teeny-tiny Shih Tsu, to miniature Poodle, to Australian Shepherd, to Labrador, to Pitbull, to Great Dane, and everything in between! They were having a great time (the humans as well as their dogs). The group responded with a very generous donation to the museum.

O. Big Four model - On September 5, **Roy Derouin** stopped by with a "little" project he had been constructing for several months. The HO scale model of the Big Four Inn and grounds (note the cabins in the foreground) is so realistic that the



iconic building was easily identified from a distance as he brought it into the museum. He still has some details to add, and said he would bring it again after he is completed. The details are amazing. He also has very interesting photos and posts on his [Facebook page](#).

P. Origins of the Evergreen State Fair - We received this from **Warner Blake**, Snohomish author, researcher, and historian:



The first fair was held in E. C. Ferguson's Blue Eagle Saloon in 1874. It's pictured left of center in the photograph above, circa 1885. The Ferguson Cottage is further to the left, the Jackson Wharf, center, and the Sinclair store to the right.

"Return with me this month to read about the beginning of the Snohomish County Fair that led directly to our Evergreen State Fair which just ended its 12-day run in Monroe. It's a [timeline essay](#) I wrote for HistoryLink, the Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History and published in October 2018. Happy and proud to be a member of this family of history writers." Our thanks to **Warner Blake** for sharing

this with us. [HistoryLink.org](#) is an excellent source for Washington State history, with several local authors who have contributed specifics about Snohomish County's past.

Q. Scherrer School - On September 19, a visitor came to the museum asking for the location of **Scherrer School**. When maps were pulled up to show him, it was discovered that the **Scherrer School** is the only school that IS NOT marked on one of the maps! He was sent an aerial photo with parcel lines showing the location of the **Scherrer School** and the teacher's cottage were located, basically across the road from **John Scherrer's** place. An older, overview image of the



Scherrer property was also sent, along with an image of the school and cottage. To cover all the bases, the latitude and longitude coordinates were also sent, just to make sure.

R. Andy Holland marsh - We received an official request from the [Washington State Committee on Geographic Names](#) to comment on a proposal to officially name **Andy Holland Marsh** for a geographic feature located near **Granite Falls** in **Snohomish County**. This committee is part of the [Washington State Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#), and they want to gather local opinions for naming proposals such as this one. The marsh is an 8-acre swamp located 3.8 miles SE of **Granite Falls** (mistakenly submitted as "SW" of **Granite Falls**). Proposed name commemorates **Andy Holland** who died in 2008. **Mr. Holland** was an [Everett Community College](#) Forestry and Mathematics Professor and a community leader, and was a wild fire lookout for the [USFS](#). **Mr. Holland** was active in the teaching community, and he encouraged generations of students to pursue Forestry. We were happy to add our 2¢ worth, suggesting that it would be appropriate.

5. Visitors - Last year in September we had 25 in-person guests as we finally opened after COVID restrictions. This year, our in-person visitors for September have been sporadic because of weather and increasing restrictions. Some of our visitors stay just briefly, while others enjoy a longer visit. They numbered 91 people (which includes the Sprinter Van group), who came from these places: **Arlington, Marysville, Richland, Gold Bar, Granite Falls, Mill Creek, Snohomish, Lake Stevens, Seattle, and Beaverton, OR**. The amazing thing is that we are consistently averaging over 200 virtual visitors a month since we started our tallying almost three years ago. For the month of September, we had 209 online visitors. Of that total, 94 came from 17 places in **Snohomish County**, 72 came from 31 places throughout the rest of the state, and 34 people came from 29 more places in 14 other

states. In addition to all these, we had eight foreign guests from **Mohali and Bengaluru, India; Santiago, Dominican Republic; Taiwan; Helsinki, Finland;** and from **Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.** Our online presence makes it possible to fulfill our purpose: **“to make it available to the greatest possible extent”.**

6. Docents/helpers/volunteers - The Granite Falls Museum can open its doors to the community with regular weekly hours (and special openings) because of our volunteers and docents. The docents are key players in this effort. We are very thankful for how they help. For the month of September these people helped as docents or volunteered in some way, several more than once: **Ron Chew, Lisa Schmidt, Diane Belyea, Tom Thorleifson, Tom Bergan, Regina Jones, Steve Jones, Marcia Day, Fred Cruger, Bob Ingraham, Robin Ingraham, Tim Quillen, and Scott Bower.**

7. Volunteer opportunities - Now that we are open once again to the general public (with social distancing and masking), we have discovered that we need help to keep open! Our small but very reliable and dedicated group of volunteers dwindled during the months we were closed. **Needed:**

- **Docents** - Volunteer tour guides Sunday afternoons from noon to 5:00 PM. No experience necessary.
- **Docent scheduler** - One person to schedule the volunteer docents to make sure we have 2-3 people at the museum on Sunday afternoons.

No experience is necessary to be a docent, and no long-term commitment is expected. Free "on-the-job" training will be provided. It's a great opportunity to serve your community, meet some wonderful people, and learn about the history of this area. Where else can you chat with people from around the state and around the country in one afternoon? Why not give it a try? Call or email: 360.691.2603 info@gfhistory.org The docent scheduler will be mentored by Marcia Day (the previous scheduler) with support from the board members. This position should be for a longer commitment, such as for a year or more.

8. Board member nominations - Nominations for the 2022 Board members will be accepted at the October 25 meeting. **Ron Chew** must step down because he may only serve two terms in a row. **Tom Bergan, Scott Bower,** and **Orion Green** can be nominated for a second term. We vote this November for the 2022 calendar year. The board meets the last Monday

2021 Board Members

****Ron Chew - President**

Bob Ingraham - Vice-president

Robin Ingraham - Secretary

Fred Cruger - Treasurer

***Tom Bergan - Board Member**

***Scott Bower - Board Member**

Marcia Day - Board Member

***Orion Green, Student Board Member**

Regina Jones - Board Member

Tim Quillen - Board Member

**** Not eligible for nomination at this time**

*** Eligible for nomination to a 2nd term**

of each month, with meetings usually lasting less than an hour. There are no requirements, but board members tend to help as docents and volunteers whenever their health and personal schedules allow. We always have enough people to help, but we are looking for those who would have a fresh view/perspective. Send an email or leave a voicemail!

10. October calendar -

10/2 Saturday - Railroad and Reunion Days cancelled 😞

10/3 Sunday, noon - 5 PM, regular Museum hours

10/10 Sunday, noon - 5 PM, regular Museum hours

10/17 Sunday, noon - 5 PM, regular Museum hours

10/24 Sunday, noon - 5 PM, regular Museum hours

10/25 Museum meeting 7:00 PM Zoom or Civic Center

10/31 Sunday, noon - 5 PM, regular Museum hours

10/31 Sunday, 5 PM-7PM, Halloween in the alley

11. Final thoughts for August - The lawn and main flower bed survived the summer heat and are now being watered by Mother Nature. The exterior of the new addition awaits gutters and concrete walkway – unfortunately, we just got word that delivery of the gutters might be delayed until November! The interior of the new room was painted the last week of September, the area around the new sink has been painted (and hopefully the plumber will install the sink before the end of the month), and things like insulation have passed inspection. The interior, low concrete walls along the east side will be stained/painted the same as the floors, so they are getting some grinding to smooth them reasonably. The much-needed museum expansion project is almost finished, then the real work is how to bring all our items from the several remote storage areas to this one new room, making sure that work space is not compromised by the large volume of documents and artifacts we have. We gladly accept that challenge!

11. “Fall”, by Joe Beckett, GFHS Class of '77, part 1

The sun lingered into September on Scotty Road, bathing the tall hills in its yellow glow, warming us with the false promise of Indian summer. Fields of green grass turned gold in its fading light, as the days shortened and cooled. The pasture wore a thick layer of gray fog in the mornings, the cows wading through the mist looking for the last morsels of new green grass. Ducks headed south in long V's, their calls echoing through the hills as they fled the coming winter. Summer sometimes stayed late, but autumn inevitably followed in its path, reminding us all of the dwindling of another year.

The Autumnal Equinox occurs around the 21st of September, marking the official beginning of fall, but when we were kids fall always really started on the first day of school. Thanks to Brad and Jim, I now know that the first day of school smelled like new blue jeans, that unique scent of fresh cotton and indigo dye permeating the air of the old yellow school bus and lingering in the long-tiled hallways, mixing with the aroma of new floor wax and industrial disinfectant. In late summer Ma sat down at her old Montgomery Ward treadle sewing machine and made clothes for us; shirts for the boys and dresses for the girls. In the late sixties I had some of the coolest homemade clothes in school, like red, white and blue striped bell-bottoms and wild paisley shirts. Mom was never afraid to put a little

color into our clothing palettes, with bright greens, yellows and purples. By spring most of them would be either too small or in rags, but we looked sharp when they were new.

On my very first day of school, Ma Beckett combed my hair with a little Groom 'n Clean or some other kind of dippity-do, and told me "You look like the Sheik of Mageekus!" then filled my barn-shaped lunchbox with a sandwich, fruit and cookies, and the matching Thermos gurgled with cold milk from Queenie or Princess or another of our milk cows. She took me to school in the old red Ford station wagon and made sure I found the correct classroom, gave me a little kiss, and left a nervous little boy in the tender care of the Granite Falls school system. Before I started school, Mom had gone to town and bullied Mr. Van Liew, the elementary school principal, into putting me in first grade instead of kindergarten. "He can write his name and tie his shoes, what does he need kindergarten for?" As a result, I was always the youngest kid in my class, but it never really seemed to hurt me too much. Fortunately for me, my first teacher was also new and nervous. Her name was Miss Enyeart, and this was her first year of teaching. She was in her early twenties and had light brown hair in a cute sixties flip, and she wore perfume and pretty clothes. I loved Miss Enyeart! She was always sweet and nice but very good at getting students to relate to their subjects, which couldn't have been easy with this gang of wild mountain kids, and she seemed to like me. Once a week Maria Burrill, the music teacher, came in and led us in singing songs. Her various school concerts were famous (ask Lorraine, aka Mama Dirt). The other first grade teacher was a squat round woman in her fifties named Mrs. Klemple, who kept her gray hair pulled back in a bun and always seemed to have a scowl on her face. She may have been nice, but I am glad I had Miss Enyeart instead! Miss Enyeart moved on to another school the following year, but she left a lasting impression on me. I think maybe because of my pleasant initial experience I enjoyed school, and even later on when I had teachers who were not so good (Mr. Bunnell? Jack Doering? Captain Jack West?), I still thought school was OK, and I seemed to do much better than my meager efforts deserved and learned in spite of myself. When we had National Educational Development Tests or SATs and I consistently scored in the 98 percentile and received awards and recognition at school assemblies, I was pretty much as surprised as anyone else was. My report cards always had the same kinds of comments: "Visits too much when he should be doing schoolwork." "Needs to apply himself" "Creative, but could do better with more effort", and my favorite "Pleasant to have in class". Apparently, my teachers saw my main problem early- a bit of a lazy streak!

My siblings had various results in school, ranging from National Honor Society and college scholarships to "I don't know if that boy will ever graduate!" As I recall, the girls generally seemed to do better than the boys, with some exceptions. Granite Falls was a very small school system at the time. My graduating class had 51 students, and was by far the largest ever up to that point; generally classes tended to be 25 to 35 students. With the buildings for grades K-12 right next to each other, everyone knew everyone else, and facilities, funds, and electives were limited. Boys learned wood shop; girls had Home Ec. Being that small of a school, extracurricular activities were pretty much confined to sports, and the beginning of Fall launched Football Season, the most popular spectator sport in town, with the Tigers taking the field under the lights on frosty evenings while the band played "Come on, Granite" to the tune of "On Wisconsin". Pa drove us into town to watch the games, and at least one of my older brothers seemed to be on the team every year. Some years the Tigers went winless, some years they were undefeated, but the games were always fun. September games started right when it was getting dark, and the evenings were still warm, and my friends and I played under the bleachers and ate sno-cones from the concession stands when not watching the games. Later in the season, the middle of the field became a deep mud hole, and by the second quarter both teams wore brown uniforms and were nearly indistinguishable from each other. Some Friday nights it rained all game long, and the bleachers were nearly empty, with soggy cheerleaders in plastic raincoats exhorting a handful of spectators to holler "Defense!" while sweeping their dripping hair out of their faces

with sodden mittens. Sometimes our team actually was on defense at the time. Those games we watched from the car, with the heater on and the wipers squeaking across the glass. High school football is the greatest! When I was older I went out for the team but I was a late bloomer and pretty small at the time. I managed to letter, but didn't actually play much. The year after I graduated I grew 3 inches and 20 pounds, too late.

September was harvest time on the farm, which meant that all the hard work we had done in the gardens all spring and summer was about to pay off. Fresh peas shelled and cooked with creamed new potatoes. Green beans right off the vine. Carrots dug up and scrubbed, eaten with a little dirt still on them, gritty between your teeth. And the ultimate, corn on the cob, dripping with melted butter, as much as you want. Some years our garden didn't produce enough corn to feed us all, but there was a farm near town that had corn for sale, which made up for it. Doug worked there when he was a teenager, and part of the benefits was that he could take some corn home, and it was mighty good corn. After the harvest we pulled the beanpoles, rolled up the pea fences, and fed the vines and corn stalks to the cows. Sometimes we played a little while we did our chores, draping each other or ourselves in pea vines. The garden was done for another year, until spring brought out the rototiller and the process began again.

In the glow of the early fall sun, fruit ripened on the trees and tempted us with their promise of sweet nectar. As our dog scouted ahead, we crossed the dry grass leading to the old orchard at the abandoned Davenport homestead, a moss-covered foundation the only sign that a house once stood at the edge of the pasture. In a far corner of the orchard, the fruit-laden limbs of plum trees drooped to the ground, weighted down by their green, yellow, or purple prizes, and after checking to make sure there weren't any bears around, we climbed high into the branches, eating as much as our swollen bellies could hold, the juice running down our chins as we filled bread sacks to take home. Tree-ripened plums by the thousands, the best I've ever tasted.

Across the road from our house, Lee Sumner, an old bachelor hermit, lived in a tiny one-room shack, and in the afternoons we would sneak over and steal his apples. He always caught us, and teasingly yelled at us for the deed, then sat on his steps and told us what kind of apples we were stealing, occasionally pausing in his botanic lectures to spit his tobacco juice. His aim was amazing! Lee could hit a coffee can from 20 feet, without really even looking. He called his lawnmower a "mechanical goat", drove an ancient white Volvo, always wore bib overalls with tobacco stains down the front over his ample stomach, and had two days' growth of whiskers as if he could only shave so close. After getting lessons about our choice of apples, we took them home and peeled them, eating the long strands of peel as we went, the house filling with the aroma of fresh baked pies. Sometimes Ma baked Lee pies from our "stolen" apples, which he enjoyed very much. I think he liked the company, and he was a huge improvement over all of our previous neighbors, most of whom were somewhat odd, if not completely crazy. First there was Vic, the old guy that shot a gun over our house (at his own peril), and then I think the Howes lived there for a while in the old house. Harold Lee Howe liked to come to our house to eat, looking for a little variety. About his meals at home, Harold Lee said "Mush, mush, mush! All we ever get to eat is mush! Mush for breakfast, mush for lunch, mush for supper! I hate mush!" The Wallaces, who let their goats run freely through the house, rendering it unlivable for future tenants, followed the Howes. They were a strange group; Bobby Wallace once ate a slug for a dime! Eventually the Wallaces moved out, and Lee was the only one left. After Lee died, the next resident was a guy known as Crazy Man, whose family sent him up Scotty Road to live in a camper so they wouldn't have to deal with him. Crazy Man wore tinfoil on his head to keep out messages from space, stood in our driveway and yelled questions like "Are you Catholics? Are you Jews?" and once threatened our dog, Snooper, with a knife. Our Mother then told him that if he stabbed our dog **(to be continued)**